

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 04907 132132Z  
ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00  
DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 L-03 /033 W  
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1900  
INFO ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE OTTAWA 4907

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: EAIR, CA  
SUBJ: CIVAIR: THE MIRABEL AIRPORT PROBLEM

REF: MONTREAL 1549 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: HOW AND WHEN TO ACHIEVE GREATER PASSENGER  
UTILIZATION OF MIRABEL IS AN ACTIVE ISSUE IN MOT. END  
SUMMARY.

2. MOT OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD TCO THAT ACCELERATED  
TRANSFER OF TRANSBORDER FLIGHTS FROM DORVAL TO MIRABEL,  
ACCOMPANIED BY ENFORCED SCHEDULING OF MORE CANADIAN  
DOMESTIC OPERATIONS THERE, ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION;  
BUT THE LATTER INVOLVES, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FINANCIAL  
AND POLICY RELATIONSHIPS OF THE GOC TO AIR CANADA WHICH  
DOES NOT BELIEVE MORE FLIGHTS CAN BE JUSTIFIED FROM A  
TRAFFIC VIEWPOINT. MOT ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT THE U.S.  
AIRLINES ARE NOT ANXIOUS TO MOVE FOR MORE OR LESS THE  
REASONS GIVEN IN REFTTEL. THERE IS FURTHER A QUEBEC  
ANGLE IN THE DELIBERATIONS IN THAT THE PROVINCE IS  
PRESSING FOR MORE ACTIVITY--ESPECIALLY INDUSTRIAL  
AND AIR CARGO-- AT MIRABLE (SEE MONTREAL 1866 AND  
OTTAWA A-278, APRIL 16, 1976).

3. COMPOUNDING THE POLICY PROBLEM IS A RECOGNITION  
THAT THE PRESENT MAIN MIRABEL TERMINAL, DESIGNED FOR  
INTERATIONAL FLIGHTS, IS NOT SUITABLE FOR OTHER  
OPERATIONS. THIS RAISES THE QUESTION OF WHEN AND  
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 04907 132132Z

WHETHER CONSTRUCTION OF TERMINAL II SHOULD TAKE

PLACE, A DIFFICULT ISSUE IN VIEW OF GOC FISCAL RESTRAINT POLICY. HOWEVER, ASSUMING OPTIMAL SPEED IN THE OTTAWA DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THIS TERMINAL COULD NOT OPEN BEFORE LATE 1982 AT THE EARLIEST.

4. RE THE TEMPO OF A TRANSBORDER FLIGHT MOVE TO MIRABEL, R. Y. 6. YANG (DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL AIR POLICY) TOLD TCO HE WAS GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC THAT A FIRM DECISION IN THE NEAR FUTURE WOULD RESULT IN AIR CANADA'S PROVIDING GREATLY EXPANDED SERVICE AND THE U.S. CARRIERS DIRECTED TO MOVE WITHIN A FEW YEARS. (HE WOULD NOT BE MORE SPECIFIC BUT TCO FELT HE WAS THINKING OF PERHAPS 2-3 YEARS.) WALTER MCLEISH, (ADMINISTRATOR, CANADIAN AIR TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION, MOT) -- WHO CONSIDERS THAT HE HAS THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MINISTER RE USE OF MIRABEL -- SAID HE FELT, AS OF NOW, THAT THE CHANCES OF A TRANSBORDER MOVE TO MIRABEL BEING ORDERED BEFORE AT LEAST 1982 WERE ONLY ABOUT 15 PERCENT. HIS OPINION MIGHT CHANGE IN NEXT FOUR MONTHS UPON COMPLETION OF CERTAIN STUDIES BUT HE FELT THESE WOULD STRONGLY SUPPORT HIS PRESENT VIEW. HE ADDED THAT, EVEN IF A DECISION TO MOVE FLIGHTS TO MIRABEL WERE TAKEN NEXT SPRING, THIS WULD REQUIRE NEW CONSTRUCTION IN THE PRESENT TERMINAL THAT WOULD BE COSTLY AND PROBABLY TAKE TWO TO THREE YEARS TO COMPLETE.

5. COMMENT: IT IS DIFFICULT TO FORECAST WHICH WAS THE GOC WILL GO ON THIS ISSUE, BUT WE SUSPECT--GIVEN GENERAL FISCAL RESTRAINT POLICY-- IT WILL SEEK A SOLUTION INVOLVING LOWEST SHORT-RUN BUDGETARY COSTS TO ITSELF WHICH MAY NOT BE MOST SATISFACTORY FROM STANDPOINT OF CARRIERS, INCLUDING U.S. CARRIERS.  
ENDERS

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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